



Ontario

Ministry of
Community and
Social Services

Government
Publications

Handicapped Children's Benefits

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The Handicapped Children's Benefits helps the parents of severely handicapped children meet the ongoing extraordinary costs arising from their child's handicap. It takes into account the family's financial circumstances and the resources such as special schools and volunteer organizations available in the community in which the child's family lives.

The purpose of Handicapped Children's Benefits is to help severely handicapped children live as normal a life as possible—at home, in the community.

How does the program operate?

The needs of each handicapped child are different. The nature of these special needs determines the basic allowance. To be eligible for Handicapped Children's Benefits the following basic requirements must be met:

- the child must be 17 years old or less, and
- the child must have a severe handicap which results in a functional loss as described below; and
- extraordinary costs, incurred because of the handicap, must be present.

The amount granted depends on:

- size of family (including parents),
- total family income (gross),
- extraordinary costs of the handicapped child.

What is a severe handicap which results in a functional loss?

This means an ongoing mental or physical condition which results in a major loss of ability to engage in any activity considered necessary to normal daily living (i.e. walking, self feeding, dressing, personal hygiene, communication, etc.) As well, the condition must be such that the loss could be considered to constitute in isolation from other factors, adequate medical grounds for admission to an active treatment or residential institution for a prolonged period of time.

The age of the child may be a contributing factor in determining severity of the handicap. Excess dependency resulting from a severe handicap in a very young child is taken into consideration as well.

How is the benefit determined?

Your child's special needs are the key factor. Certain special needs, which may not be currently provided because of limited family income will also be considered in determining the benefit amount. If you request, a ministry representative will help you document the special needs. These may include diets, clothing, drugs, transportation, nursing care or costs of short-term parental relief. Ministry staff at the local level will then consider those needs and make a recommendation, taking into account recent expenditures, potential costs and other factors which make your child's situation unique.

What is entitlement?

Special needs - basic entitlement

Basic entitlement varies between the minimum of \$25 with \$25 increments to an established maximum. The amount granted will most closely represent the additional monthly costs associated with the handicapped child's special needs. Consequently, documentation of special needs and their cost will be the key factor in determining the amount of the benefit which will be paid.

Total income (gross)

Total income of the family is the gross sum of that reported by both parents for income tax purposes during the previous calendar year, together with any income reported for income tax purposes as having been received by the child. (The calculation of total income appears on the bottom of page 1 of the appropriate income tax return).

Net entitlement

This is the actual amount you receive as determined according to your total income. If your total income is below certain specified limits, the monthly cheque will be the same as the basic entitlement previously discussed. If your total family income is over the specified limits, the basic entitlement is reduced according to income scale tables. These tables are revised periodically and adjusted to reflect changes in economic conditions, etc. Details of the rate tables are available from your nearest Ministry office.

Note

For those families with more than one severely handicapped child, allowable income levels are adjusted accordingly.

Additional benefits

When Handicapped Children's Benefits are approved there are additional benefits which will automatically be made available to your child. Please note that these benefits are for your handicapped child and are in his/her name. They are not transferable to other family members.

- **Drug Benefits** – a drug benefit card in your child's name will automatically be issued. This card provides free a number of prescription drugs which are listed in Ontario's Drug Formulary. Your physician should be made aware of your child's entitlement to such drugs. The card must be presented at the pharmacy when a prescription is ordered.
- **Dental Card** – a dental card in your child's name will automatically be issued. This card provides free, regular (maintenance) dental work. It does not cover special dental requirements such as braces.
- **Eyeglasses and/or hearing aids** are supplied where necessary. The worker assigned to your case would provide details of procedures.

Note

The Special Services at Home Program (Ministry of Community and Social Services) and the Assistive Devices Program (Ministry of Health) might also be applicable. Your worker should be consulted for further details and advice.

Some situations that may affect the allowance

When Handicapped Children's Benefits are being received, changes in circumstances such as those listed below, may alter the allowance and should be reported immediately to your worker.

- Your child enters a hospital, residence or institution.
- Your income decreases or increases significantly.
- Your address or marital status changes.
- Your family size changes.

Should I apply?

Yes, if you believe that:

- your child is severely handicapped under the description stated;
- your child has special (extraordinary) needs and costs associated with his or her handicap;
- your family income is within the low or middle income range (for family size).

How do I apply?

- Obtain an application form from your nearest ministry office. After filling in all details return the form to the office. On receipt of this completed form a ministry staff member will arrange a home interview to verify income and costs. You may also be asked for medical documentation respecting your child's handicap.
- If the help of a ministry staff member is required to complete the application form, please contact the office which sent the form.
- Your completed application is then submitted to an area review group, consisting of people familiar with the needs of handicapped persons.

Ministry Offices

For the nearest office of the Ministry, please see Community and Social Services in the Ontario Government section of the blue pages of your telephone directory.



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